

House Bill 374 Training Guidance

OPI shall provide guidance and technical assistance to Montana schools on youth suicide awareness and prevention training materials. Training materials offered must be approved by OPI, meet the standards for professional development, and be periodically reviewed by a qualified person or committee. This will help with consistency and accepted principles of youth suicide awareness and prevention training.

- HB 374 recommends at least 2 hours of training every 5 years.
- Training shall be provided at no cost to the employee.

Training may be offered through various methods:

- In-person attendance at a live training;
- Videoconference;
- An individual program of study of designated materials;
- Self-review modules available online; and
- Any other method chosen by the local school board that is consistent with professional development standards.

To help your school community decide what kind of training fits with your current needs, we recommend you assess your implementation and purpose. This can be done by answering the five questions and reflecting on which training area(s) your school community could most benefit from.

Step 1. Assessing Implementation

Assessing where your school community is at in the process of providing youth suicide awareness and prevention training will address your level of implementation thus far.

1. Has your school community provided any youth suicide awareness and prevention training including skills to identify signs of suicide?
2. If yes, has your school community provided students and staff training in skills to identify signs of suicide within the last 12 months?
3. If yes, does your school community have a protocol that outlines how a suicide incident is handled in the building?
4. If yes, does your school community have a protocol for transitioning a student in/out of the building who is suicidal to address continuity of care?

Step 2. Purpose of the Training

Knowing the purpose of your training can ensure you are getting the necessary information to individuals at the right time. For example: If school staff have never talked about suicide together, a logical place to start would be with an awareness training. This can be a strategy to bring forth a topic that can be highly sensitive and challenging to discuss. Many of us in Montana are impacted by suicide. Once an awareness training has taken place, you might decide a next step would be to provide space for reflection or skills. The following list is intended to help you decide what would be most beneficial for your school community.

Awareness: (Example might be a speaker who shares his or her story. There can be a lot of power in storytelling and one way to motivate community and schools to take further action.)

- Trainings currently on the OPI webpage have various components of awareness, located at <http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/HealthTopics/SuicideAware.html>.
- Jason Foundation through Acadia Montana and Montana Jason Foundation, contact information located at <http://www.acadiahealthcare.com/programs-and-services/jason-foundation>.
- On-Line Trainings such as Kognito have a component of awareness.
- Other awareness trainings might include personal story telling such as Kevin Hines.

Skills to Identify and Refer: (Example might include training on how to ask the question “Are You Thinking About Suicide?”, how to respond if an individual says “Yes” and then how to refer the individual in crisis to appropriate professional help.)

- Trainings currently on the OPI webpage such as QPR, YMHFA, SafeTalk, ASIST, all fit within this category. Located at <http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/HealthTopics/SuicideAware.html>.
- Safe Schools offers varied courses that fit within this category. All courses are located at <http://www.safeschools.com/>. Safe Schools can also be contacted by calling 1-800-434-0154 or email info@safeschools.com.
- On-Line Trainings such as Kognito teach skills to identify and refer.

Action: (Example might be more advanced training in developed protocols and assessments. Being able to answer: Any adult that works for my school or districts knows who to refer to when they might be concerned about a student. Furthermore, the referral and assessment process is understood by everyone working for my school or district.)

- Three pilot regions in Montana can be used as resources – Bitterroot Education Cooperative, located at <http://www.bvec-mt.org/>, Fort Peck Tribes located at <http://www.fortpecktribes.org/honoryourlife/index.htm>, and Prairie View Education Cooperative located at <http://www.pvssmt.org/>.
- Staff listed on the OPI webpage can provide guidance on what action may look like for your school community. Located at <http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/HealthTopics/SuicideAware.html>.

Postvention: (Example for intervention done after a suicide might be asking “what is the process in place to respond to a suicide?”)

- Suicide Prevention Coordinator, Montana DPHHS
- Other postvention trainers you might suggest? <http://www.sprc.org/resources-programs/connect-suicide-postvention-training>

Reflection: (Example might be reflecting on what kind of space is there for students to process and moreover, how are staff being supported post a tragedy?)

Youth Voice: (Example might include using focus groups to ask for student voice or surveying students to find out what might be most helpful to them.)

- Bitterroot Education Cooperative, website located at <http://www.bvec-mt.org/>.
- Teacher Learning Hub Course, such as *A Student Guided Approach to Suicide Prevention*.

- On-Line Training such as Kognito has the peer to peer training component.
- Signs of Suicide Program through the Suicide Prevention Coordinator, Montana DPHHS.

Assessment: (Example might entail reviewing your school and/or district policy)

- This would certainly be a part of the ongoing protocol training, communication and coordination and part of what takes time.
- C-SSRS assessment is free resource with Montana trainers available. Located at <http://cssrs.columbia.edu/>.
- PHQ-9 and PHQ-A depression screeners are also free resources. Located at <http://www.integration.samhsa.gov>.
- Your school systems CSCT staff, school counselors, school psychologist, social workers and nurses might be internal assessment trainers, or at least an effective starting place.

Referral: (Example might include resource mapping appropriate professional help in your school environments and in your community.)

- This might be an area where you assess who a student that might be having suicidal thoughts would be referred to.
- Looking at resource mapping through an MTSS or ISF model.

Additional Resources

Overview of the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention: Goals and Objectives for Action

<http://store.samhsa.gov/product/National-Strategy-for-Suicide-Prevention-2012-Overview/PEP12-NSSPOVER>